

THE CZECH ECOLABEL

Introduction

The Czech Republic environmental labeling program was initiated by the Resolution of the Czech Republic in 1993 and was started in 1994. It organizes its basic principles around the EU guidelines. “The primary objective of the Czech Eco-labeling Program is to encourage environmental protection via the production and utilization of products which have a reduced environmental impact.” The program is voluntary in nature, and supports credibility, transparency and public participation as primary principles. It also looks to provide equal access for domestic as well as imported producers. The program, to date, has announced 17 categories of products and has awarded labels to 198 products from 29 companies.

Program Summary

The program is composed of two primary organizing bodies: the Board of the Czech Eco-labeling Program and the Czech Ecological Institute Agency. The Board is an advisory body to the Minister of the Environment and administers the program. It is composed of experts from government, research, quality testing authorities, and environmental and consumer organizations as appointed by the Minister. The Board assesses categories and criteria for products and submits suggestions for revisions of the guidelines. The Minister then awards the right to use the ecolabel and approves guidelines. The Minister also established and financially supports the Agency. In conjunction with the testing authorities and the Czech Environmental Inspection Division, the Agency is responsible for examining applications with regard to compliance to standards.

Draft guidelines for product criteria are prepared by an ad hoc group of experts and submitted to the Board. Manufacturers are closely involved with the process in order to encourage product design and development improvements. Criteria are revised every two years.

Applicants may then submit an application to the Agency for their product. An initial registration fee is collected by the Agency. If a label is awarded, the manufacturer enters into a licensing agreement with the Agency and pays a flat fee of 20,000 CZK. During this two-year contract, the Agency ensures that the manufacturer meets the requirements.

Program Methodology

Draft guidelines for product criteria are prepared by an ad hoc group of experts and submitted to the Board. These environmental criteria are developed using a “cradle-to-grave” assessment. Manufacturers are closely involved with the process in order to encourage product design and development improvements.

Other Information

The Czech environmental labeling program is part of the EU environmental labeling program and works toward harmonization with other countries through the EU framework. The Czech program organized a seminar titled “Eco-labelling in the Czech Republic - Harmonisation with the European Union.” In addition, 41 percent of the companies awarded labels by the program are foreign-based.

References

Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic. *Eco-labelling in the Czech Republic*. February 1997.

Product Categories (number of awarded products in parentheses)

Final Categories

- Thermal insulation made from used paper (1)
- Lubricating oil for the cutting edge of chain saws
- Textile detergents
- Water dilutable paints (20)
- Gas-fueled hot-water boilers with atmospheric burners (11)
- Gas-fueled hot-water boilers with compressed air burners (6)
- Liquid cleaning agents (1)
- Water dilutable adhesives and sealants (3)
- Hygienic paper made from recycled paper
- Graph paper made from recycled paper
- Gas-fueled flow-through hot-water boilers up to an output of 50 kW (5)
- Wood-based agglomerated materials and products
- Hot-water boilers and local solid-fuel units
- Briquettes made from wood waste (1)
- Hydraulic fluids
- Gas-fueled light and dark infra-red radiators
- Surfactant-based washing cosmetics